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OUR WAR WITH GERMANY

VI

(August 18—September 18)

Because "we cannot take the word of the present rulers of Germany as a guarantee of anything that is to endure," the Government of the United States, speaking through President Wilson, signalized the sixth month of American participation in the war against Germany by refusing to accept the proposition put forth by Pope Benedict as a basis for the discussion of possible terms of peace. Mr. Wilson's reply to His Holiness was the most important, as it was the most interesting, event of the month.

Pope Benedict's proposal contained two propositions both of which President Wilson has now rejected, and in such manner as to render it practically impossible ever to revive either of them. His Holiness suggested a consideration of peace terms largely upon the basis of the status quo ante-bellum, and with the present German Government. In a prior public statement President Wilson had destroyed the possibility of peace on the status quo ante basis by pointing to the fact that "it was out of the status quo ante that the present iniquitous struggle issued forth." He refused to contemplate the possibility of renewing a situation which involved such a dreadful potentiality. In this reply to the Pope the President goes much further and refuses to enter into negotiations with the present rulers of Germany on the frankly stated ground that they are not to be trusted, not worthy of belief or confidence, not responsible or reliable.

This statement of governmental determination and purpose, with its overwhelming exposition of underlying reason, was received with instant approval by patriotic Americans, and served to render more difficult the continued opposition of the narrowing forces of disloyalty, sedition and pacifism which are operating throughout the country, from Congress down. It was hailed with satisfaction in the countries of our allies, and accepted generally and officially as their response to the Pope.

As was to be expected such a declaration of the bankruptcy of German national honor and good faith produced a furious outbreak of anger in Germany and among Germanophiles in this and other countries. Just when the chorus of vituperation and denunciation of Mr. Wilson was at its height, Secretary Lansing made public a contribution to the case against German honor which was the text of three telegrams sent by Count Luxburg, the German Minister at Buenos Aires, in code to the Berlin Government. Direct German communication being impossible owing to British control of cables, the German diplomat at the Argentine capital had recourse to the friendly assistance of the Swedish Minister,

Baron Lowen, who accepted the German cipher messages and transmitted them as his own to the Swedish Foreign Office at Stockholm, whence they were forwarded to Berlin.

It was not the mere transmission of telegrams for the German Legation that constituted an offense against neutrality. Our Government did that for Bernstorff, until it sent him home. It was the character of the messages themselves that was a crime against humanity, but the kind of crime, unfortunately, that seems only too common among Germans of the ruling class. Count Luxburg coolly informed his Government of the sailing of certain Argentine vessels for European ports, and of the time at which they were likely to be approaching the European coasts, and brutally recommended that they be sunk so as not to leave a trace of what had happened to them—*spurlos versenkt*. That is, the ships were to be destroyed and the crews and passengers murdered in cold blood.

Count Luxburg used the diplomatic courtesy and freedom of restraint which he enjoyed in Buenos Aires to carry on secret plots for the destruction of the lives and property of Argentine citizens. Incidentally he referred in one of his despatches to the Argentine Foreign Minister as a "notorious ass."

The reception of these disclosures by German officials in Berlin and elsewhere, and by Germans and Germanophiles in this and other countries, is an absolute demonstration of the unerring accuracy of President Wilson's characterization of the German rulers as bankrupt of honor and good faith. There was first denunciation of the American Government for "stealing the German despatches." Then there was furious denunciation of Count Luxburg, not for being guilty of the hideous brutality of his messages, but for being caught and exposed. Not a German voice of prominence or importance has been raised in condemnation of the savage proposals of the German diplomat. The German Government was exculpated by some of its officials on the ground that it was not responsible for the opinions of its agents, and that Luxburg's despatches were only the recommendations of one man. But the German Government is responsible for retaining him in his post after receipt of his uncivilized recommendations, and for failure instantly to disavow his barbarism and recall him from his post. However, the German Government is not repudiating barbarism.

The Argentine Government has dismissed Luxburg and is asking Berlin for explanation. There is a new crisis in relations between Argentina and Germany. Sweden is making promises of reform, and is asking Berlin for explanation and disavowal. Sweden disclaims responsibility upon the ground of ignorance of the contents of the Luxburg despatches. The United States Government permitted the sending of German despatches in code by wireless prior to the break of diplomatic relations with Berlin, but it took good care to know the contents of each despatch, and to prevent messages that would violate neutrality.

America's sixth month in the war has been like the others a month rather of preparation for participation than of actual sharing in real fighting. The daily news reports have been well sprinkled with despatches from London, Paris and Rome telling of activity on the part of Americans already abroad, and of the vigorous training of the forces with General Pershing, in France, in anticipation of the day when they shall

undergo the fierce test of meeting the German face to face in the field.

Organization of the armies destined to give the actual demonstration to Germany of American physical power has proceeded regularly and with not more delay, disappointment or failure than was to have been expected from the long refusal of the United States to take thought of her military responsibilities by making preparation or taking training in advance. National Guard regiments from all parts of the country have been assembling in divisions, and undergoing the process of radical transformation from their old organization units into units of the national fighting forces. Delay in completing construction work at different camps has held back the full employment of the Guard in this work, but the promise is that this delay shall be ended in very short order. Similar failure to complete construction work on some of the cantonments assigned to receive contingents of the "selected" men for the new National Army rendered it necessary to hold back the calling of men to the colors in some proportion. Moreover it has now been fully demonstrated to the country that adequate supplies of clothing, uniforms, weapons, munitions and other essential supplies are no more likely to be forthcoming over night than are a million men to "spring to arms" in that period.

The first contingents of the so-called "drafted men" were called to the colors on September 5. In many cities these contingents organized parades, and gave proof of their loyalty and enthusiasm for the great cause which they serve. President Wilson personally marched at the head of the Washington parade, and distinguished members of his Cabinet, and leaders of the Senate and House of Representatives, trudged down Pennsylvania Avenue from the Peace Monument to the White House with him. Veterans from both sides of the Civil War marched side by side at the head of the column of the new draft.

The graduates of the various training camps of the Officers' Reserve Corps had received their commissions just in time to get into active work at the new cantonments receiving the contingents of drafted men and beginning their organization and training. The end of the first week of September found nearly 1,100,000 men under arms in the various American forces.

Meantime procurement of further supplies of the various kinds needed for the proper equipment and maintenance of these men went forward, and was accompanied by further organization of the supply corps, and of the means for procuring supplies.

Less publicity has been given to activities of the Navy Department than to those of the War Department, but that does not prove that the Navy has been less active than the Army. The announcement is made that Admiral Mayo has been in London for some time, purpose not announced, but obviously connected with naval strategy and employment. The event is seized upon by those favoring an aggressive policy as evidence that the United States is for an attack on the Germans in their various lairs—Heligoland, the Kiel Canal and Zeebrugge.

Secretary Daniels has given more emphasis to his belief that the rapid construction of torpedo boat destroyers is the most effective method of combating the submarine, and the House is soon to take up a bill appropriating an additional quarter of a billion dollars or more for such new vessels. It is announced from the Navy Department that in order to

obtain the earliest and most rapid delivery of the new destroyers it will be necessary for the Government to finance concerns willing to enlarge their plants for this work, all the present destroyer building facilities being fully occupied.

While the Navy is thus busy the Army is working on aeroplane construction, and it is announced from Washington, with much satisfaction, that a special aeroplane motor, already designated the "Liberty Motor," has been designed for the equipment of the enormous American aircraft fleet for which Congress appropriated six hundred and forty million dollars a few months ago. But it is reported among those who have been consulted by the Aircraft Production Board about building some of the motors or other aeroplane machinery that not a single contract of any importance has been signed as yet.

Similar delay is reported in getting to work on the plan of the Shipping Board for standardized construction. Many contracts have been let for ships of one kind and another, some wood and some steel. Commitments for vast sums have been undertaken. But in all the talk of new ship construction emphasis has been laid upon the point that it was the fabrication of standardized ships that was to be the chief factor in solving the submarine problem. It was not until early in September that contracts were let for the first Government fabricating plants.

This month has been one, also, of marked recognition of the essentially economic character of the struggle in which we are engaged. Economic organization has proceeded broadly along two main lines, one for the control of our resources at home, and the insurance of proper supply at proper prices to our own people; and the other for the control of the shipment of our resources away from the country, and the insurance that nothing we raise or manufacture shall be used to furnish any aid or comfort to the enemy. The power to make the first of these purposes effective and energetic comes from the Food Control laws. That for the second comes from the export control sections of the Espionage law. The Food Administration is proceeding vigorously in the effort to make good the promise of Mr. Hoover, the Food Administrator, to bring down the price of bread. Difficulty is encountered because a price of only \$2.20 per bushel was fixed for the wheat crop of this year. Farmers believe that without control the price would have been higher, and are slow in bringing their wheat to market. The immediate danger is that instead of the price of bread being lowered there will develop a scarcity of flour and consequently of bread.

On August 20 President Wilson announced the appointment of Judge R. S. Lovett, head of the Union Pacific Railway, as Federal Agent under the Priority law, which gives the Government power to determine priority of shipments over railroads. Judge Lovett signalized his appointment by directing forty-six railroads to give preference to shipments of coal to the lakes for the Northwest. The purpose was to prevent the kind of suffering for lack of coal in that territory this coming winter that was endured last winter. The railroads seem to have done their part, but there was no control of the coal after it reached the lakes, and instead of being shipped to the Northwest a good share of it was sent to Canada. Also the Middle West declared it was not getting sufficient fuel to keep its factories running. Then the Exports Administrative Board required

licenses for shipments of coal to Canada, so that that leak seems to be stopped.

On August 21 the President announced a schedule of prices which he had fixed on bituminous coal, at the mine. It averaged about a dollar a ton less than the \$3 price agreed upon two months ago by Secretary Lane and the leading coal producers of the country in a conference at Washington. That price was repudiated promptly by Mr. Baker, Secretary of War. The President's prices seem more satisfactory to Mr. Baker, but not to the producers, many of whom have been protesting that they are below cost of mining, and will certainly curtail production if the Government insists on them.

Two days later, on August 23, the President announced prices on anthracite ranging from \$4 to \$5 a ton at the mine, and named Dr. Harry A. Garfield, president of Williams College, as Fuel Administrator, under the power granted by the Food Control law. Anthracite dealers, especially retailers, have not conformed to the President's schedule and the cry of coal shortage begins to come up from various parts of the country.

The wheat control power of the Food Administration became effective on September 10. Mr. Hoover is putting a system of licensing mills and other handlers of grain into effect, and announces that he expects a reduction of \$3 a barrel on flour, which should save the people of the country thirty millions a month.

In a public statement at Washington Mr. Hoover said he saw no hope of reducing the price of meat and pointed out that the supply is too small for the normal demand. Nevertheless it is reported from Washington that he is planning to put the meat industry under license. This is under consideration as a means of eliminating speculation.

The Food Administration also expects to license the sugar industry, and has issued fervent appeals to the people to save sugar. Meantime the Department of Agriculture is conducting the national survey of food which was authorized under the first of the food control laws.

While these measures of domestic control are being taken the President has extended the power of the Exports Administrative Board, and that body has made it clear that it does not propose to permit anything to go out of an American port which might be of the least service to Germany. For instance a large number of Dutch ships, loaded with grain and fodder, have been lying in American ports for weeks seeking permission to sail. Their grain cargoes, at least, are owned by the Dutch Government. Recently agreement was reached by the Dutch negotiators with the Food Administration for the release of about thirty of these ships, on condition that two-thirds of their grain should go to the relief of Belgium. But the Exports Board held up the permits because of the fodder, and the ships are still in American waters. No adequate assurance was forthcoming from the Dutch that that fodder would not find its way to Germany, or that the produce of the Dutch cattle it might feed would not get into Germany.

It has been made clear that there shall be no American food for neutrals in Europe or elsewhere who help supply food or other needed articles to Germany. Also the President has put shipments of gold and silver under control of the Exports Board, which means that they cannot go

without license. And in most cases they will not get the license. Spain has been taking millions of gold from the United States although she has a heavy adverse trade balance with us. It costs 10 per cent to ship gold to Spain from New York now, 5 per cent for freight and as much for insurance. But Spain has taken more than fifty millions recently, and it is suspected in Washington that some submarine method has been found for getting part at least of this gold to Germany.

Secretary McAdoo has asked Congress to give the Government control also of imports, and the intimation is made that the Government is planning to prevent shipments of supplies to Germany from South America.

Price fixing and exports control have their corollary in a new purchasing agency established in Washington to do the purchasing of supplies for the United States, Great Britain, Russia and France, with Italy expected to come in very soon, and possibly others of our allies.

Labor troubles, strikes and walk-outs have made their inevitable appearance, as they always do in periods of prosperity and high wages. Much effort has been made toward reaching adjustment of such differences and toward finding a means of avoidance and settlement in future during the war. As far as shipping is concerned an agreement which it is hoped means settlement was reached under which an "Adjustment Commission" was appointed by the President, consisting of Mr. V. Everit Macy, president of the National Civic Federation, as chairman, with representatives of the American Federation of Labor and of the United States Shipping Board. A representative either of the War Department or of the Navy Department will sit with the commission when it considers matters affecting either of those departments. Workmen at the League Island Navy Yard sent a delegation to Washington to pledge their loyalty and assure the Government against strikes on national war work.

The Senate spent most of the month on the War Revenue bill, which it had given many weeks to rewriting after receiving it from the House. A hard fight was made by about twenty Senators, of the so-called "radical" element, to increase the rates of taxation on personal incomes and on war profits. The cry was to "conscript wealth" as men had been conscripted. Scores of varying amendments were submitted and all defeated. But the Finance Committee yielded in part to the demand for greater taxation of wealth and itself proposed an amendment to its own bill, raising by some hundreds of millions the amount estimated to be raised from war profits. The bill was passed by the Senate on September 10, by a vote of 69 to 4. It is estimated to yield \$2,406,670,000, chiefly produced by incomes (\$842,200,000), war profits (\$1,060,000,000), and distilled spirits (\$218,000,000), this last estimate being a public admission that the so-called "prohibition" feature of the Food Control bill was a fake as a prohibition measure. All consumption taxes were stricken out by the Senate, but a few special taxes were provided, estimated to raise \$141,750,000. The bill is now in conference.

The Senate also passed the Enemy Trading bill, previously passed by the House, with an amendment requiring German language newspapers in this country to print translations of political and editorial articles in parallel columns. At the same time the Senate passed a resolution permitting the drafting of subjects of our allies for our military service. It

is estimated that this places more than a million and a quarter of additional men at the disposition of the Government. There are 87,000 enemy aliens of military age in the country.

The House occupied itself with a bill providing a system of insurance for officers and men of the American service for the benefit of their families, at low cost. President Wilson expressed himself as warmly in favor of this bill. As originally brought up in the House it set a limit of \$5,000 on policies. The President said he wished it were twice as much, and it was made so. Criticism of the provisions of the bill has come from some of the prominent insurance men of the country, but not of the principle. One of the purposes of the measure is to provide a system that shall do away with the present pension system, as applicable to this war, or greatly reduce its operation. This bill was passed unanimously on September 13.

The House also passed unanimously a bill authorizing the issue of more than eleven and a half billions of four per cent United States bonds. The expansion of debt is really not as great by this bill as it seems, for more than half a billion of the new bonds will take the place of those authorized for different purposes not necessarily connected with the war, such as the Mexican border service of last year, and others. Also three billions cover merely the authorization to raise the interest of that amount of bonds authorized last April from $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to 4 per cent, and four billions are for loans to our allies.

The House has also passed another huge appropriation bill, carrying more than seven billions of dollars, and the Army, Navy and Shipping Board are not through asking for more. The Shipping Board wants another billion. The Navy wants hundreds of millions. There is talk of more hundreds of millions for aeroplanes, with not even a contractual start made yet on expending the first six hundred and forty millions.

Representative Fitzgerald, chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, in a statement in the House on September 14, placed our expenditures for the first year of the war at eighteen billion dollars, as compared with a total of \$21,000,000,000 by Great Britain for the three years of the war, fifteen billions by France, a similar amount by Russia and only three billions by Italy. Our Loans to Allies aggregated close on to the three billions at first authorized, as this was written. Mr. Fitzgerald's speech adds emphasis to the mass of other evidence as to the value of pre-war preparation. A huge percentage of our present cost is due to the failure to make the preparation in time and the extra expense of making it now under adverse and costly conditions.

This work by the Executive and Legislative branches of the Government has been more or less public and spectacular, but the work of the Judicial branch has been no less effective. In a single nation wide raid on the offices of the I. W. W. an effective check was put upon the seditious work of that disloyal organization, and evidence of value in other ways was accumulated. A raid on a German newspaper in Philadelphia produced similar results. The curbing of sedition and disloyalty, whether in newspapers, alleged labor organizations, or among soap-box orators on street corners, is progressing, and thus, belatedly but energetically, the United States is getting ready to show some real participation in the war.

(This record is as of September 18 and is to be continued.)